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### ***Dumpster divers find your medical records?***

**LANSING**—How would you feel if your personal, private medical records were to be tossed into the trash like yesterday's newspaper? Violated? Shocked? Exposed?

In an era in which identity theft has become a major criminal issue, Sen. Bruce Patterson, 7<sup>th</sup> District, has authored a bill to require careful disposal of records whose retention was no longer necessary.

“My bill is to protect the privacy of individuals,” said Patterson. “Medical records are between individuals and their doctors—and if necessary, their insurer; but no one else should have access to them, even by accident. Clearly, private records should never be discarded in a haphazard way. Confidentiality must be maintained.”

Patterson is vice-chair of the Senate Health Policy Committee. Senate Bill 466 passed the Senate today with strong bipartisan support. It is part of a package of bills that includes SB 465, which concerns health care facilities, and SB 467, which protects personal genetic information.

Sen. Patterson worked closely with the governor's office to craft the appropriate language for the bills. The legislation protects computerized records as well as paper records.

“We must keep up with the technology as it advances,” said Patterson. “The old statute was enacted in 1939. It was outdated.”

SB 466 also requires that Medicaid records be retained for seven years after the end of service, rather than six years, as is now required.

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